

THE BIBLE SOCIETIES AND ROME

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- The following is from the book *Unholy Hands on God's Holy Book: A Report on the United Bible Societies*, by David W. Cloud, Way of Life Literature, copyright 1985.

The United Bible Societies is an international body formed in 1946 which is composed of some 130 national Bible societies, including the American Bible Society, the Canadian Bible Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society. The United Bible Societies have worked with the Roman Catholic Church in various ways from the beginning, and these joint endeavors have become common place today. We will briefly trace the history and some main facts about this affiliation. It should be noted that the growth of this partnership between the Bible societies and the Catholic Church has coincided closely with the proliferation of the new texts and versions of scripture. The corruption of the Bible is a product of apostasy:

1960s

"The work of joint Bible translation and distribution between Protestants and Catholics was encouraged by 'the Driebergen conference of Bible societies in June 1964, which was attended also by Roman Catholics. The chief recommendations of the conference were: to prepare a "common text" of the Bible in the original languages, acceptable to all Churches, including Roman Catholics; and to explore the possibility of preparing a "common translation" in certain languages, which could be used by Protestants and Roman Catholics alike. It was further recommended that the Bible societies should consider translating and publishing the Apocrypha when Churches specifically requested it'" (Andrew Brown, *The Word of God Among All Nations*, p. 122).

"In 1965, the Second Vatican Council set a seal of approval on this form of co-operation. In the Constitution on Divine Revelation it was stated that 'Easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful.' ... Further: 'If given the opportunity and the approval of Church authority these translations are produced in co-operation with the separated brethren [non-Catholics] as well, as Christians will be able to use them.' [*The Documents of Vatican II*, translated in W.M. Abbott--J. Gallagher, 1966, 'Constitution on Divine Revelation' VI/22]. These provisions meant that new translations did not have to be based on the Latin Vulgate, and inter-confessional co-operation was permitted" (Brown, op. cit., p. 122).

"One result of Vatican II was the setting up in 1966 of the Vatican Office for Common Bible Work ... An example of the new spirit of co-operation was soon found, in the revision of the Bible in Swahili. It was reported in 1966 that the Roman Catholic Tanganyika Episcopal Conference had reached agreement with the British and Foreign Bible Society on the use of the text of the Union Version of 1952, with the understanding that the Apocrypha would be included as well as selected notes and comments from the Jerusalem Bible [a Roman Catholic Version]. ... The BFBS thus again

abandoned its former policy of excluding the Apocrypha, and notes and comments" (*The Bible Translator*, United Bible Societies, April 1966; *The Word of God Among All Nations*, pp. 123-124).

1966 was also the year in which the Bible society's Today's English Version New Testament was first published and gained almost immediate acceptance by the Roman Catholic Church. Of this we read,

"The best-selling Bible translation in history has been cleared for use by Catholics as well as Protestants. It's the so-called Today's English Version of the New Testament published by the American Bible Society. ... The translation has received the official approval or imprimatur, of Cardinal Richard Cushing, the Catholic archbishop of Boston. It was Cardinal Cushing who earlier gave an imprimatur to the Protestant-sponsored Revised Standard Version. Protestant and Catholic scholars in recent years have reached substantial agreement on the translation of the Bible into English, and Cardinal Cushing's expert consultants did not seek a single change in the text of the TEV before approving it for Catholic use" (United Press International report, Louis Cassels, Religious writer).

"In 1969 another development took place, with the formation of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate. The object of this organization was to co-ordinate the Bible translation work of Catholic scholars and facilitate their co-operation with the United Bible Societies" (Brown, op. cit., p. 124).

1970s

1975 was a big year for Bible distribution at the Vatican, and the Bibles being distributed were provided by the United Bible Societies!

"The Secretary of the Italian Bible Society reported that during 1975 Pope Paul VI distributed during his personal audiences 300,000 copies of the Epistle of James, specially prepared by the United Bible Societies and the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate" (Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record*, Jul.-Sep. 1978, pp. 6-8).

By 1976, in the decade since the Second Vatican Council, more than one hundred and thirty inter-confessional translation projects had been undertaken, and more than fifty inter-confessional translations of the New Testament completed. Projects on complete Bibles included the Apocrypha. It also remained a requirement that translations prepared and published by Catholics "in co-operation with the 'separated brethren' should be accompanied by 'suitable explanations'" (*The Word of God Among All Nations*, p. 124).

It was in 1976 that the complete "common language" New Testament was published in Italian as a joint project of the United Bible Societies and a Catholic group with explicit Vatican approval.

"Bishop Ablondi said that two Catholic priests are working for the Italian Bible Society for the distribution of this New Testament, with the approval of their Bishop, and that the translation of the Old Testament started after a seminar held under the auspices of the United Bible Societies during June 1977. The Ludwigshafen assembly was informed that the Italian New Testament was presented to the Bishops attending the Synod in Rome as 'an example of modern dynamic equivalent translation [actually referring to a very loose and careless paraphrase!], and as a model of interconfessional cooperation'" (Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record*, op. cit.).

In 1978 the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate made the following report: "By 1977 the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate has become a major instrument of the Catholic Church in the realization of the goal [of ecumenical Bible distribution], in particular with regard to co-operation with the United Bible Societies. 'Each year witnesses to closer and more significant collaboration between these two organizations'" (Activities Report 1977, published by the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate).

Among the thirty-one Religious Orders associated with the World Catholic Federation are the "Oblates of Mary Immaculate" in Italy and Germany, and the "Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help" in Korea (Activities Report 1977, published by the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate).

1977 also witnessed a Europe-wide Bible society conference attended by high leaders in the Catholic and Orthodox churches:

"Delegates from the whole of Europe met at the Ludwigshafen conference to discuss the future of the United Bible Societies. Monsignor Ablondi, Bishop of Livorno, Professor Tavares of the Catholic University of Lisbon, and representatives of the Greek Serbian and Rumanian Orthodox Churches, were present as full members of the assembly" (*The Biblical Apostolate*, VIII/2/78, quoted in Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record*, Jul.-Sep. 1978, pp. 6-8).

1978 witnessed the completion of several "interconfessional" translation projects between the United Bible Societies and the Roman Catholic Church. In this one year translations were completed in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and German. All of these were the so-called "common language" versions, meaning they were based upon or modeled upon the Bible society's corrupt Today's English Version (Good News Bible). Some of these were published with the Apocryphal Books added, and with the addition of marginal notes and comments acceptable to the Roman Catholic Church (Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record*, Jul.-Sep. 1978, pp. 6-8).

1979 witnessed UBS leaders attending a Catholic conference in Mexico and pledging closer cooperation with Rome:

"The [Catholic] Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopacy took place at Puebla, in Mexico, and was opened by Pope John Paul II. At the conference, representatives of the United Bible Societies participated in an ecumenical religious service, and also provided a Bible

information stand and closely co-operated with the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate. Regarding this co-operation, we are told: 'It signifies an official recognition of the services being offered by the UBS and announces the beginning of a new era and a new spirit of collaboration at the service of God's Word. It is the firm hope of the WCFBA [World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate] that this prophetic breakthrough has opened doors of communication and co-operation which will become a sign and instrument of the power of God's Word to renew the continent'" (*Word-Event*, United Bible Societies, No. 36, p. 27).

1980s

As of 1981 there were over 200 interconfessional translation projects in progress (C.B. Hastings, "Looking Closely at Complex Catholicism," *The Commission*, South Baptist Convention: Sep. 1982; *The Commission* is the official missions publication of the Southern Baptist Church).

By 1981 over 500,000 copies of the Good News Bible, with the Apocryphal Books added, had been published and distributed by the American Bible Society (*Foundation*, Jul.-Aug. 1981).

By 1982, one Vatican secretariat sponsored more than a hundred full-time scholars in cooperation with the United Bible Societies in Scripture translation in many lands! (Hastings, *The Commission*, Sep. 1982).

By 1984 "the pace had quickened, and it was reported that out of a total of 590 translation projects of the United Bible Societies, as many as 390 were of the interconfessional type (*Word-Event*, United Bible Societies, No. 56, p. 28).

1986 was a high water mark in relations between the UBS and Rome. That was the year that the UBS presented a copy of the new Italian interconfessional Bible to the pope:

"The Italian Bible Society recently presented Pope John Paul II with a copy of a new Italian interconfessional Bible in a ceremony at the Vatican. Italian President Francesco Cossiga has also received a copy in the presidential palace. Both Protestants and Catholics co-operated in translating the new Bible, which is the result of 7 years' work. It has been published jointly by the Italian Bible Society and a Salesian publishing firm. ... The presentation of the Bible to Pope John Paul II was made by Luca Bertalot, the young grandson of the Italian Bible Society's general secretary Revd Dr. Renzo Bertalot. United Bible Societies was represented by consultant to the UBS, Revd Dr. Laton E. Holmgren.

"Addressing the Pope, Dr. Holmgren said, 'For the first time in four centuries the Bible is a bond of unity rather than a source of division. Despite differences of tradition, dedicated people are producing more and more common Bibles which are being used in scores of lands and languages.'

"Pope John Paul replied, 'Accept the warmest expression of my grateful appreciation for the result of your efforts. The task which you have undertaken is an important moment of collaboration. I

ardently desire that it should not pass in vain, but that it truly produce a fertile rediscovery of our common base of origin. In returning to it, the entire Church cannot fail to benefit in rejuvenation, mutual cohesion and effective testimony to the world. I invoke the Lord's blessing upon all of you and upon your work.'

"The edition presented to the Pope carries the imprimatur (official Catholic approval) of the Bishop of Turin. ... Also present at the Vatican ceremony was Bishop Alberto Ablondi of Livorno, Italy, who is a member of the United Bible Societies General Committee and president of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate. Members of the Bible translation team attended with him.

"Copies of a new Catholic Study Bible, which uses the Good News Bible text, were presented to guests at the ceremony. The Bible contains notes on the text approved by the Catholic Church and has been published by American publishers Thomas Nelson" ("Pope Receives New Bible," *Word in Action*, British and Foreign Bible Society, Spring, 1986, No. 49, p. 4).

1990-2000

In 1997 the Polish Bible Society published a new translation by Roman Catholic Bishop Kazimierz Romaniuk. A new Polish interconfessional Bible is in progress, and Romaniuk is the co-ordinator of the project. Ten or eleven denominations are participating, including Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, and Churches of Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist are also involved.

During Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in 1998, Bible Commission Secretary Jose Lopez of the Cuban Council of Churches presented him with a United Bible Society Bible. A UBS Special Report for November 1998 noted that "one of the most important aspects of Pope John Paul's visit to Cuba was that it helped lower barriers between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals." The same report described an ecumenical service that was held in 1996 during which "55 Catholics and 200 Evangelicals worshipped together."

In March 1998, an ecumenical meeting was held in Embu, Kenya, to observe the publication of the interconfessional gospel of Mark in the Kiembu-Kimbeere language. The Bible Society of Kenya is in charge of the project, which features Anglican and Roman Catholic translators. Catholic priest Gabriel Muverethi, Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Embu, spoke at the meeting.

In June 1998, eight Protestant and six Roman Catholic members of the Bible Society of Cambodia paid a visit to King Norodom Sihanouk to mark the launch of a new Khmer Common Language Bible. Among the participants was Catholic priest Francois Ponchaud. The king said he was pleased to see Protestants and Catholics united around the Bible.

In February 1999, the National Bible Society of Ireland published a Bible study by Catholic priest Pat Collins entitled *Seeking with ... the Father*.

In early June 1999, the translators of the new interconfessional Polish Bible were presented to Pope John Paul II at a special ecumenical service in Drohiczyn, Poland. On May 31, 1999, the Pope mentioned the new translation while speaking at the 46th Eucharistic Congress in Wroclaw, Poland. He praised the ecumenical spirit of the Bible societies and said that once Christians are committed to the path of ecumenism there is no turning back.

In October 1999, the Bible Society of Burkina Faso (in Africa) joined hands with Roman Catholic leaders to dedicate the new Moore Catholic Bible. The ecumenical ceremony featured speeches by Catholic Archbishop Jean Marie Untaani Compaore, Pastor Flavien Tapsoba of the Federation of Evangelical Churches, and Antole Ouedraogo, board chairman of the Bible Society of Burkina Faso. Ouedraogo said "the Bible Society exists to serve all denominations." Three Catholic priests worked on the translation.

Also in 1999 the General Secretary of the Polish Bible Society, Barbara Enholc-Narznyska, delivered a lecture at the Roman Catholic University of Lublin in commemoration of the Wujek Bible, the first Catholic Bible in Poland.

In December 2000, the Austrian Bible Society co-produced a six-hour radio program entitled *Long Night with the Bible*, that featured Roman Catholic priest Wolfgang Schwartz, Jewish rabbi Chaim Eisenberg, and Lutheran Michael Bunker.

In 2001, the American Bible Society published the *Jubilee Good News Bible*, a Bible for black Roman Catholics. It features "an approved Catholic version," plus the Apocrypha books, and articles promoting Catholic doctrine. It includes stories of African popes.

Hundreds of other examples could be given. It is plain that the United Bible Societies are fully given to an unholy ecumenism. It matters not that the Roman Catholic Church preaches a false gospel that leads multitudes to Hell. It matters not that Roman Catholicism is filled with all sorts of doctrinal error. The UBS intends to "serve all churches" no matter what the Word of God says!

ROMAN CATHOLICS IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WITH THE UBS

In the 1970s a Catholic woman named **Maria Teresa Porcile Santiso** was employed full time by the United Bible Societies as directress of ecumenical affairs in the regional centre of Mexico" (*Word-Event*, No. 36, p. 6).

"The new president of the WCFBA [World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate], the Right Reverend Monsignor **Alberto Ablondi**, is the Catholic Bishop of Livorno in Italy. Simultaneously he is a member of the General Committee and European Regional Executive Committee of the United Bible Societies, thus playing a part in the formulation and review of the UBS general policy" (Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Report*, Oct.-Dec. 1985, p. 24).

"Among the UBS Vice-Presidents will be found the name of **Dr. Francis Arinze**, who is not only a Roman Catholic archbishop (of Onitsha in Nigeria) but has also recently been made a Cardinal by the Pope" (Ibid., p. 25).

Since 1967, Roman Catholic **Cardinal Carlo Martini** has been one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. He is the Archbishop of Milan, and his diocese in Europe is the largest in the world, with two thousand priests and five million "laity." He is a Jesuit who, according to Time magazine, could be in line for the papacy. He is Professor of New Testament Textual Criticism at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He is also President of the Council of European Bishop's Conferences.

The American Bible Society Record for May 1996 reported that Roman Catholic priest **Robert J. Robbins** is one of the ABS trustees. "An ABS board member since 1991, Father Robbins also serves on the Committee on Trustees and on the Finance/Administration and Executive committees. ... Fr. Robbins is pastor of the Church of the Holy Family in the United Nations Parish, New York City, where he has served since 1989. ... The American Bible Society commends Fr. Robbins for his wise counsel and his dedication to the worldwide Bible cause."

In 2001, the Houston, Texas, office of the American Bible Society honored Catholic Bishop **Joseph Fiorenza**, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, at a Leadership Awards Luncheon.

We see from these quotes and observations that the United Bible Societies have drawn very close to the Roman Catholic Church in their work of Bible translation and distribution. Surely it is more than a coincidence that since the days of the production of the English Revised Version of 1881 (with its preference for Catholic manuscripts), the reversal of the Protestant Reformation has grown with amazing rapidity.

In the above quotes we see how the Bible societies now distribute Bibles which contain the Catholic Apocryphal books, which should not be a part of the Bible at all as they give no evidence of being inspired of God. On the trip to Calcutta mentioned earlier in this study I saw stacks of shiny new Bibles which had recently arrived from America. They were published by the American Bible Society and contained the Apocrypha.

We also see that the Catholic Church has not given up its false teachings for the sake of these ecumenical Bible projects. The ecumenical movement is a one-way street as far as the Vatican is concerned, and that street leads straight to Rome! How clever the Roman Catholic leaders are! In these interconfessional translations, the United Bible Societies are providing money and personnel for the publication of Catholic Bibles, Bibles which contain the Catholic Apocryphal Books as well as notes promoting Roman traditions.

One tradition that is continually reinforced concerns the role of the virgin Mary. Paragraphs 282-303 of the conference [the 1979 Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopacy,

opened by Pope John Paul II and attended by representatives of the United Bible Societies] document are entitled "Mary, the Mother and model of the Church," and concern Mary's role in "evangelization"; the document does not fail to mention the Catholic doctrine of Mary's "Immaculate Conception" and "Assumption" (Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record*, Apr.-Jun. 1981, pp. 14-15).

The attitude of the United Bible Societies toward the Roman Catholic Church, for the most part, is summed up in the policy of the Canadian Bible Society. Of this member of the United Bible Societies we read, "THE CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY CONSIDERS ITSELF TOTALLY AT THE SERVICE OF CATHOLIC BIBLE WORK" (Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record*, Jul.-Sep. 1978, pp. 6-8). Even the Pope could not desire more than this!

We would warn our readers again that God's Word absolutely forbids any Christian to fellowship with or support apostasy. In 2 John and again in Revelation 18:4 we are warned that to do so means we will be partakers of the evil deeds of those we are fellowshiping with and/or aiding. No born again Christian should give even the smallest offering toward the Bible society's work. If a born again Christian is in a church which fellowshiping with or supports the Bible societies, part of your tithes and offerings are going to support the evil we have been considering in this study. God warns that He will hold you responsible to know where your money is going and He will judge you if you aid apostasy. Don't you hear the call of God:

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

THE BIBLE SOCIETIES ARE INTERCONNECTED: ALL MEMBER BODIES ARE THEREFORE PARTAKERS OF THESE EVILS

"The United Bible Societies organization was launched in 1946, and now coordinates the work of most of the world's Bible societies, including the British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland, the American Bible Society, and the Netherlands Bible Society, among others. It is, in effect, the 'Bible society wing' of the World Council of Churches" (*The Word of God Among All Nations*, p. 124).

There are 135 different Bible societies associated with the United Bible Societies as of 1998. All of these societies are tied together organizationally as well as spiritually. To support any one of the Bible societies is to support all of them. If a Christian in America supports the American Bible Society he is not only upholding up the evil of that one society, but is also supporting the apostasy of other Bible Societies--such as the one in the Philippines--around the world.

Yes, I realize there are some born again people working with the Bible societies. Revelation 17-18 describes the apostate one world religion and one world government of the last hours of this present age. The picture is that of total apostasy and wickedness, and yet the Bible says some true people of God are involved in these movements because God's call is "Come out of her, MY PEOPLE, that

ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Consider three simple lessons from this passage:

1. There are some truly saved people in the last hours movement of apostasy of our day. 2. God calls from heaven to those who are saved, exhorting them to separate from the apostasy. 3. Those who ignore this call will be judged.

The decision is clear. The pressures of family, tradition, security, fear of the unpopularity of a separated position, and many other things are brought to bear against the Christian who desires to be faithful to God in an apostate day. God is calling from heaven and requiring a complete separation of His people from apostasy. Whom will we fear--God, or man? To whose voice will we hearken--heaven's or the world's?

We must warn, in conclusion, that faithful Christians must have nothing whatsoever to do with apostate organizations such as the United Bible Societies. We have given sufficient facts to show that these societies are disobedient to the Word of God in their affiliations with the false Catholic Church, with Christ-denying liberals, with Unitarians and others. The Bible warns that if we affiliate with those who are apostate and disobedient we will be partaker of their evil deeds.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" 2 John 8-11.